

4VAC15-50-110

Game: Bear: Use of dogs in hunting bear.

Summary:

This proposal will more explicitly define current time restrictions on the use of dogs for hunting bears to enable the extension of deer firearms (open) seasons for disease and population management purposes in certain areas of Virginia.

Proposed language of amendment:

4VAC15-50-110. Use of dogs in hunting bear.

A. It shall be unlawful to use dogs for the hunting of bear ~~on the Saturday prior to the third Monday in November and for 15 consecutive days following during the open season for hunting deer~~ in the counties west of the Blue Ridge Mountains and ~~during the first 16 days of the deer open season~~ in the Counties of Amherst (west of Business U.S. 29 from the James River to its intersection with U.S. 29 just south of the town of Amherst continuing north on U.S. 29 to the Tye River), Bedford, and Nelson (west of Route 151) and within the boundaries of the national forests, except that tracking dogs as described in § [29.1-516.1](#) of the Code of Virginia may be used.

B. It shall be unlawful to use dogs for the hunting of bear ~~on the Saturday prior to the third Monday in November and for 13 consecutive days following during the first 14 days of the open season for hunting deer~~ in the Counties of Greene and Madison, except that tracking dogs as described in § [29.1-516.1](#) of the Code of Virginia may be used.

C. It shall be unlawful to use dogs for the hunting of bear during the open season prescribed in [4VAC15-50-11](#) in the Counties of Campbell (west of Norfolk Southern Railroad), Carroll (east of the New River), Fairfax, Floyd, Franklin, Grayson (east of the New River), Henry, Loudoun, Montgomery (south of Interstate 81), Patrick, Pittsylvania (west of Norfolk Southern Railroad), Pulaski (south of Interstate 81), Roanoke (south of Interstate 81), and Wythe (southeast of the New River or that part bounded by Route 21 on the west, Interstate 81 on the north, the county line on the east, the New River on the southeast, and Cripple Creek on the south); in the City of Lynchburg; and on Amelia, Chester F. Phelps, G. Richard Thompson, and Pettigrew Wildlife Management Areas, except that tracking dogs as described in § [29.1-516.1](#) of the Code of Virginia may be used.

Rationale:

This proposal enables extension of deer firearms seasons without having to reduce bear chase or hound hunting opportunities where and when they currently exist. The Department currently needs to extend deer firearms seasons (open seasons) to address chronic wasting disease (CWD) management in northwestern Virginia; in the future, extensions of deer firearms seasons may be needed for population management purposes in certain other western counties. Without the proposed changes to this regulation, the Department would have to reduce opportunities to hunt bears with dogs in order to extend the deer firearms seasons in these areas. For example, the Department is currently proposing to add early antlerless firearms deer season (September) in Clarke, Shenandoah, Frederick, and Warren counties to address CWD. Dogs can be used to hunt bears in these counties during the 3-day early bear firearms season (late September). The current regulation language would prohibit these bear and deer hunting opportunities from running concurrently. Experience east of the Blue Ridge Mountains suggests that conflicts between bear hunters and deer hunters will be minimal as long as the first two weeks of the traditional deer firearms season in November excludes the hunting of bears with dogs.